

**Trip Report: Pond Mountain Game Land**  
**June 6, 2020**

Pond Mountain Game Land is located in the northwest corner of North Carolina where Virginia and Tennessee all meet. It is quite remote, so we left Asheville very early to get up there for the good birding hours. We started off birding the lower elevations of the game land and quickly found some of the more common summer residents including Indigo Bunting, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and American Goldfinch. Clouds hung low over the ridge but stayed just high enough to not affect visibility. Bird song stayed steady and as we climbed higher up the ridge the surrounding landscape began to unfold. Green mountains in every direction! On top of the ridge Song Sparrows dominated the soundscape. Common Yellowthroats and Field Sparrows were also abundant. We tried to call in a Black-billed Cuckoo but had no luck. We then turned our attention to birding the highest elevations of Pond Mountain where the Vesper Sparrows breed. We were striking out until we reached the summit of Pond Mountain and finally were rewarded with a few Vespers perching in the open and close by. We even managed to hear one sing between all of the noise of the Song Sparrows!

We then took a lunch break and enjoyed views looking south into the High Country of western NC. After lunch we drove to a different part of the game land that is lower in elevation and mature northern hardwood forest. Lots of forest birds were singing including Black-throated Blue Warbler, Ovenbird, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager and Hermit Thrush. After being very patient and quiet we got fleeting but great views of a Canada Warbler. It was a great way to end a lovely day up in Ashe County, NC

Clifton Avery

### **Birds Seen or Heard**

Chimney Swift  
Ruby-throated Hummingbird  
Broad-winged Hawk  
Turkey Vulture  
Downy Woodpecker  
Hairy Woodpecker  
Northern Flicker  
Eastern Wood-Pewee  
Red-eyed Vireo  
Blue-headed Vireo  
Blue Jay  
American Crow  
Common Raven  
Carolina Chickadee  
Tufted Titmouse  
Red-breasted Nuthatch (Heard)  
White-breasted Nuthatch

Barn Swallow  
European Starling  
Gray Catbird  
Brown Thrasher  
House Wren  
Veery  
Hermit Thrush (Heard)  
Wood Thrush  
American Robin  
Cedar Waxwing  
American Goldfinch  
Chipping Sparrow  
Field Sparrow  
Dark-eyed Junco  
Vesper Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Eastern Towhee

Red-winged Blackbird  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Ovenbird  
Black-and-white Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
Hooded Warbler (Heard)  
Northern Parula (Heard)  
American Redstart (Heard)  
Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Black-throated Blue Warbler  
Black-throated Green Warbler  
Canada Warbler  
Scarlet Tanager  
Northern Cardinal  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting